

Rise, Teach, Learn - Season 1, Bonus Episode

ChicoFlex

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We acknowledge and are mindful that CSU Chico stands on lands that were originally occupied by the first people of this area, the Mechoopda, and we recognize their distinctive spiritual relationship with this land and the waters that run through campus. We are humbled that our campus resides upon sacred lands that will sustain the Mechoopda people for centuries.

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Welcome to the Rise, Teach, Learn podcasts. I am Dr. Chiara Ferrari, Director of Faculty Development at Chico State. And we are happy to make this resource available to our campus community and beyond. The podcast is hosted by Dr. Jamie Linn Gunderson. And she will engage in timely conversations with faculty, staff, and students and give you a taste of the Chico experience. Subscribe to our podcast and explore the many resources available on our website. Thank you for listening.

00:58

Hello, and welcome to Rise, Teach, Learn. I'm your host, Jamie Gunderson. In this bonus episode, I along with the Chico Flex team discussed this year's pilot for teaching and interacting with students in person and online simultaneously. All right, I am here with the Chico Flex team, including Mike Magrey, the director of Creative Media and Technology, Brett Liotta the lead of Classroom Technologies and Marjorie Shepard, Instructional Technology consultant, Kathy Fernandes, our Academic Technology Officer and Chiara Ferrari, our Director of Faculty Development, so I want to open it up to the team and I just kind of want to start with an overview of what Chico Flex is. So we're hearing both of these terms, hyflex and Chico Flex. So Kathy, I'm gonna throw it to you can you kind of give us a little rundown on the different terms and I'm what Chico Flex really is?

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Yeah, hyflex has been around for a while and his faculty or students may Google it, you'll find that hyflex allows students to choose whether they want to be in person for class, or whether they want to be online that is with mics and cameras in the classroom. And they can actually then peer in from the online format, or revisit the lectures and sessions for class, asynchronously versus synchronously. So hyflex really allowed maximum flexibility for students to pick and choose each week how they want to attend class, of course, with COVID and we were talking about a social distancing. student, you know, we couldn't ask 30 students, hey, what do you want to do, because we needed enough space in each classroom. So we created Chico Flex, and Chico Flex just has a little bit more structure. There's different ways to configure whether students are going to be in person, either once a week or permanently for the semester, and those that are going to be for the same class online, either rotating or again consistently throughout the whole semester.

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Mike and Brett talk a little bit about what this technology looks like in the classrooms

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Sure, yeah. So in these in these classrooms, we're outfitting them with cameras and microphones. In addition to that, there's also a touch panel controller to select various modes and control certain things about the cameras and the microphones. But the core of it is the cameras and the microphones. What's kind of unique about the cameras and the mics is that they they're both auto tracking capable. So the camera has the ability to recognize that there's a person there, and it knows to follow that person around. And it also knows to not follow another person around once that if there's two people in front, so that's pretty cool. And then the microphone kind of acts in the same way the microphones mounted at the ceiling. And it It knows to optimize the sound quality for who's ever talking. And it knows to steer it. It's it's microphones as several actually up in there, towards whoever's talking. And the room is the goal kind of was to make the rooms so that faculty have to interact with the technology as little as possible. Now, it's kind of impossible, that they would not have to interact with it at all. But for a lot of users of the room, it should be just as simple as powering it up, and then starting their Zoom shushan session because the camera can auto track and the mic can auto track, the camera and the mic, do pretty much all the work.

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Can you tell me how many classrooms can we expect on campus that are outfitted with this model?

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So by the fall semester, we'll have 133 classrooms that have this capability.

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I understand that everybody here today is part of the Chico pilot, the Chico Flex pilot, and I'm kind of wondering what we're learning in that model. So I just want to open it up to the group and can we share some kind of things that we're seeing about Chico Flex and its implementation with our instructors.

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In short, we're learning so much I am so incredibly grateful of the about the five faculty that are doing the pilot with us. Because there is no way that we could learn without actually seeing a class running without actually seeing interaction with students. So we're learning everything from issues with managing the technology, which, as Brett mentioned, it's not as complicated and challenging as I think everyone was expecting. So I it seems that all the faculty agree that that is not the main concern. But we're also learning about class management. So how do you manage discussion? How do you manage the simple tasks that in hyflex become a little bit more complex? How do you deal with the space, so it's the same space, but you need to deal with the space a little bit differently, maybe move a little slower, so that camera can follow you. We're learning about student engagement, which is really not just an issue in high flyers, but it's, it's an interesting topic to always keep in mind. And so I have been, I have been incredibly excited about what this technology can do with the for us, but also, what these type of pedagogy can do for us.

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Yeah, I'll add to that, to that, you know, are the five faculty who were brave enough to do this pilot are of different disciplines and of course, have different teaching styles. So it's really a great experience to have each of them in the room. And of course, physics needs something a little different than geography might need. And then based on this, the faculty's interactive style, whether they call on students and the relationship already developed with the students how it's there, as well as then when they have multiple students in the in the classroom, how they plan to do breakout rooms differently, or group students together. So there's a whole lot to learn. And it's been a lot of fun to to learn together. But I'm going to invite Marjorie to share a little bit about what she has seen and felt working with the faculty, she's done a good job outlining for them, you know, here's what's possible, here's how to prepare, what kinds of tools do you need? So Marjorie, what do you feel like we've been learning?

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Well, just in response to the this student experience, there was just a survey conducted. And I'm actually just getting out of a class right now. And there was a survey that was just conducted. And generally speaking, over 75% of the students in this particular section of this class thought it was, you know, the experience was good or outstanding. So that was the remote students that were answering them from the perspective of being a student in the class. Think, you know, it's just, it's nice. There is a little bit of synergy that happens. I think, being in the class and seeing the people online. And in the people online are really, I think they're just so glad to see their instructor back on archery, I

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I have to tell you, I'm a little geeked out about going back in fall, and I had been presented with the opportunity as we're scheduling classes, to, you know, hey, do you want to do the high flex or Chico flex model? And I was like, Yeah, sure. Right. I feel like that would be great. And so I signed up for both of the courses that I teach in the fall to be Chico Flex. As a person who is going to be engaging with this technology, how can I set myself up for success over the summer to be prepared in managing this type of classroom for both in person and online learners?

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Well, if you can come to Go Flex, and then we'll just make sure that you get time in these classrooms and that you feel comfortable, because each of these classrooms actually has what Brent and I have been calling its own five,

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What kinds of things can I expect to learn at these go flex sessions in the summer?

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We're gonna get started by splitting up the days it's five days, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and the mornings will of course be Zoom sessions where we can share information even bring back the faculty who've been in the pilot, and you know, basically go over some of the basics etc. But in the afternoons, the faculty will actually get each of them to take turns being the teacher in the in the Chico Flex classroom, being the in person, student and being the online students so that the faculty member will get the experience of what that's like in each of those situations. And then as as Marjorie said, we will continue to allow them again, you know, for the five days as well as

beyond if they need to, to actually give it a shot, record reflect and, you know, give it a go another day. So I think between Faculty sharing this experience together, it will be a fun co creation of Oh, I like that Oh, that worked well and being able to see one another's different strategies.

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I love it. I'm looking forward to engaging in GoFlex. At some point in the summer, do you know approximately how many faculty are gearing up to jump into this model?

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Well, we're going to expect up to potentially 200 faculty. Now, Mike Magrey knows the numbers of the late You know, the schedule keeps changing. And of course, faculty are finding out more about this model. And just because somebody teaches in a in a Chico flex room does not necessarily mean they're going to choose to teach with the Chico flex modes. But my Mike has a number. I don't know that last number, Mike was something like 700 750 sections are utilizing the Chico Flex mode?

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Jamie, can I add one thing, you know, and this is something that I've really learned from the faculty that are participating in the pilot that, you know, both, all of them are fairly consistent in saying that the technology is not as intimidating as they expected. But all of them are also saying, Do not take this for granted, do not underestimate the learning curve that will be needed, both in terms of learning the technology. And in terms of just feeling comfortable that it's there's that level of comfort that, as you know, instructors that have taught for for a long time, you can just walk into a room and teach, you cannot do that in a hyflex room. And so we just want to encourage faculty that are planning to teach in rooms equipped with hyflex technology to really take some time to come to the training. Hopefully everyone could, will be able to attend the training. But just to understand that there's going to be a little bit of a learning curve, both in terms of dealing with the technology and the overall management and just in terms of reaching that level of comfort.

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So just like anything, it takes a little practice, in terms of Chico Flex Is this a long term like type of technology that we are going to have access to as professors?

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Yes, I do believe so obviously, we've invested in the infrastructure and invested now in the training, I think that we're still catching up to ourselves regarding a vision and leadership for where Chico State goes. But for those campuses that have already been doing high flex as far as being more available more inclusive and allowing students to be able to pick and choose based on managing jobs, family situations that they get into and still want to continue their degree, I believe that Chico flex creates a lot

more availability for them to finish their classes and therefore finish to graduate and finish their degree. So I think that while we may not have exactly the the vision and the particulars at this point in time, I think we will be creating that together going forward.

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That sounds awesome. I encourage all the faculty and staff out there who are teaching classes in the fall to look into the Chico Flex model. If you think you want to jump on board, sign up for a go flex training, work with your ASC to make sure you're scheduled in a Chico Flex room. I want to just end our time together by opening it up and seeing if there's anything else that our Chico Flex team would like to add.

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It's been fun to learn. It's been fun to learn as a team and not you know, as a separate unit. I think that just by working with people that have different perspective, different roles on campus, he does allow me to see things from different perspectives. And so I think that we're very lucky on our campus to have this strong synergy between faculty development, creative media and technology, classroom technology and TLP and academic technology.

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It's a number another demonstration of the kind of collaboration across the campus that makes Chico State so special.

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And there you have it, folks. Today we discuss the Chico Flex model and I encourage you to consider learning more about this innovative technology. For more information including faculty perspectives from the Chico Flex pilot, check out the Chico Flex Friday Forum on the FDEV website. Interested in Chico Flexing in the future. Contact TLP or FDEV for support resources and workshops that will set you up to flex in style. I'd like to thank the Chico Flex team for contributing to this episode, and I'd also like to extend a special thank you to Quinn Winchell for our podcast music into the vocal stylings of Dr. Browning Neddeau for the land acknowledgement. Join us for our next episode wherein we will engage in conversation centering on student success. Until then we got this Wildcats!